

Amendments To the Claims:

1.-49. (cancelled)

50. (currently amended) An automation system for the graduated, usage-equivalent automatic licensing of multifunctional and/or expandable software products, comprising:

an integration platform to integrate selected ones of a plurality of software products purveyed by a licensor to a systems integrator through the system, the integration platform being arranged by the systems integrator to form a Manufacturing Execution System (MES), which when executed by a processor is arranged to control an automated production process, wherein the integration platform comprises an adaptor base, wherein the adaptor base is adaptable by the systems integrator to create respective application-specific adaptors, wherein a control solution to be executed by the processor arranged to control ~~provided by the systems integrator to an end user~~ of the automated production process comprises at least one of the following: a first group of software products as integrated by the systems integrator in the integration platform without application-specific adaptors, and a second group of software products as integrated by the systems integrator and further including application-specific adaptors, wherein the control solution is purveyed by the systems integrator to ~~the~~ an end user through said system, wherein the control solution can be expanded by the systems integrator to include additional software products and/or application-specific adaptors based on new functionality provided by the additional software products and/or application-specific adaptors;

a first mechanism for detecting functionality used and for comparing this with already licensed functionality of a software product;

a second mechanism for providing information regarding functionality used but not yet licensed;

a third mechanism for generating time-limited authorization to use functionality not yet licensed;

a fourth mechanism for generating an order and/or a request for an offer to the licensor;

a fifth mechanism for creating a license by the licensor; and

a sixth mechanism for permanently authorizing use of the functionality licensed by the system, wherein a license fee is based on the following: a volume of data managed by the integration platform in connection with the automated production process, the software products integrated in the integration platform and a number of application-specific adaptors used by the MES for providing the control solution to the automated production process.

51. (canceled).

52. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the first mechanism is adapted for detecting a new instance of the software product or the integration platform.

53. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the first mechanism is adapted for detecting the use of the adapter base ~~or the integration platform~~.

54. (currently amended) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the first mechanism is adapted for detecting the expansion of the functionality of the software product ~~or the integration platform~~.

55. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the second mechanism is adapted for informing a user by a dialog window about functionality used by said user but not yet licensed and to request said user to obtain a license for the functionality used.

56. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the third mechanism is adapted for issuing a provisional license for a period of time needed for handling the order and for generating and installing a permanently valid license.

57. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the fourth mechanism is adapted for e-mailing the licensor an order for the granting of a license.

58. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 57, wherein a customer-specific account has been provided for automatically debiting the license fee due following receipt of an e-mailed order.

59. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 57, wherein a card on which a pre-paid amount is registered is provided as the customer account.

60. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the fourth mechanism is adapted for e-mailing the licensor a request for an offer to grant a license.

61. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the fifth mechanism is adapted for granting a license for producing a license key.

62. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein a seventh mechanism is adapted for disabling the newly used functionality if licensing is not carried out by the licensor within a specified period of time.

63. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the system is adapted for iterative use by a primary user if additional functionality is provided on the basis of the software product or the integration platform by the primary user for secondary users, with use being effected by generating secondary licenses.

64. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 63, wherein the system is adapted for provisioning a license key function for the primary user for the specifying of a licensing identity by the primary user.

65. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 63, wherein the system is adapted for a flexible scalability of the secondary licenses by the primary user.

66. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 63, wherein an eighth mechanism is provided for apportioning the license fees to be paid to the licensor and primary user by the secondary user.

67. (previously presented) A system according to Claim 66, wherein apportioning of the license fees is provided via a web licensing service.

68 - 98. (cancelled).

99. (new) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the first mechanism is adapted for detecting the expansion of the functionality of the integration platform.

100. (new) A system according to Claim 50, wherein the first mechanism is adapted for detecting the expansion of the functionality of the integration platform.

101 (new) An article of manufacturing comprising a computer-usable medium having computer-readable code, which when executed by a processor is arranged to form an automation system for the graduated, usage-equivalent automatic licensing of multifunctional and/or expandable software products, the computer-readable code comprising:

computer-readable code arranged as an integration platform to integrate selected ones of a plurality of software products purveyed by a licensor to a systems integrator through the system, the integration platform being arranged by the systems integrator to form a Manufacturing Execution System (MES) to control an automated production process, wherein the integration platform comprises an adaptor base, wherein the adaptor base is adaptable by the systems integrator to create respective application-specific adaptors, wherein a control solution arranged to control the automated production process comprises at least one of the following: a first group of software products as integrated by the systems integrator in the integration platform without application-specific adaptors, and a second group of software products as integrated by the systems integrator and further including application-specific adaptors, wherein the control solution is purveyed by the systems integrator to an end user through said system, wherein the control solution can be expanded by the systems integrator to include additional software products

and/or application-specific adaptors based on new functionality provided by the additional software products and/or application-specific adaptors;

computer-readable code for detecting functionality used and for comparing this with already licensed functionality of a software product;

computer-readable code for providing information regarding functionality used but not yet licensed;

computer-readable code for generating time-limited authorization to use functionality not yet licensed;

computer-readable code for generating an order and/or a request for an offer to the licensor;

computer-readable code for creating a license by the licensor; and

computer-readable code for permanently authorizing use of the functionality licensed by the system, wherein a license fee is based on the following: a volume of data managed by the integration platform in connection with the automated production process, the software products integrated in the integration platform and a number of application-specific adaptors used by the MES for providing the control solution to the automated production process.